

of mere taste should so long have made you unjust to yourself in relation to what you are in progress to realize ? And if, persisting to decline an exercise of such faithful consideration, you go on a venture to meet a consequence unspeakably disastrous, will an unhallowed and proud refinement appear to have been a worthy cause for which to incur it ? You deserve to be disgusted with a divine communication, and to lose all its benefits, if you can thus let everything have a greater influence on your feelings concerning it than its truth and importance, and if its accidental and separable associations with littleness, can counteract its essential inseparable ones with the Governor and Redeemer of the world, with happiness, and with eternity. With what compassion might you be justly regarded by an illiterate but zealous Christian, whose interest in the truths of the New Testament at once constitutes the best felicity here, and securely carries him toward the kingdom of his Father; while you are standing aloof, and perhaps thinking, that if he and all such as he were dead, you might, after a while, acquire the spirit which should impel you also toward heaven. But why do you not feel your individual concern in this great subject as absolutely as if all men were dead, and you heard alone in the earth the voice of God; or as if you saw, like the solitary exile of Patmos, an awful appearance of Jesus Christ and the visions of hereafter ? What is it to you that many Christians have given an aspect of littleness to the gospel, or that a few have sustained and exemplified its sublimity ?

### LETTER III.

ANOTHER cause which I think has tended to render evangelical religion less acceptable to persons of taste, is the *peculiarity of language* adopted in the discourses and books of its teachers, as well as in the religious conversation and correspondence of the majority of its adherents. I do not refer to any past age, when an excessive quaintness deformed the composition of so many writers on religion and all other subjects ; my assertion is respecting the diction at present in use\*